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# NORTHEASTERN LOGGERS' HANDBOOK

by

Fred C. Simmons  
PRELIMINARY REVIEW EDITION



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&  
CER  
SM



*Easier and Safer Work*



*Greater Production (more pay) and Better Living Conditions*

## SECTION 6 : — TOOLS FOR PEELING WOOD

NORTHEASTERN FOREST  
EXPERIMENT STATION



United States Department of Agriculture

FOREST SERVICE  
NORTHEASTERN FOREST EXPERIMENT STATION

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If you want to be a mechanic, you will easily find plenty of good books which will tell you what you need to know. You will also find plenty of instructors and training shops.

What about the young man who wants to make his living by logging? For him there is no good source of information to which he can turn. The books and courses on logging are for the logging engineers--not for the fellow who uses the axe and crosscut.

Why shouldn't there be a simple illustrated handbook which will tell the young woodsman (or the green woodsman) what he needs to know about the care and use of his tools and the best of the old and the new techniques of, and devices for logging? He needs to know the "tricks of the trade" as much as anyone.

We hope that these pages, together with other short papers like it, will finally be put together in a printed NORTHEASTERN LOGGERS' HANDBOOK. We are putting it out in this form first because there seems to be an urgent need for this sort of information; and because we need the help and advice of persons who know about logging in our region before printing. We want the experienced logger to tell us what important things we have missed and where our advice is not good. We want the young man going into the woods for the first time to tell us what parts of it he finds hard to understand, to suggest how it can be made more useful to him. We would like the equipment manufacturers to check our recommendations for use of their products and tell us about new devices they are developing.

Please send criticisms, questions and suggestions to: The Director, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, 614 Bankers Securities Building, Philadelphia 7, Penna. Additional copies of this and other publications in this series can be obtained from the same address.

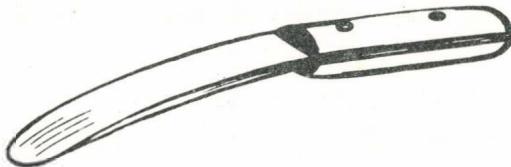
January, 1946

### TOOLS FOR PEELING WOOD

Wood is peeled for one of two reasons; either to get rid of the bark before it interferes with some manufacturing process such as pulping, or to make use of the bark for some purpose such as the extraction of tannin from hemlock and chestnut oak. Until the wartime scarcity of labor, more wood was being peeled every year. Even the sawmills were finding that peeled logs were more satisfactory. Their saws required less sharpening and cut faster and more accurately, and the slabs and edgings, bark free were salable for pulpwood and other uses which bring a higher price than they do for mill waste fuel. Veneer plants also prefer peeled bolts.

Much wood is peeled by mechanical debarkers at the mill, but these machines have many disadvantages. Some of them waste a great deal of wood in the barking process. Others do not do too clean a job, leaving long stringers of undesired inner bark on the bolts. Most of them are expensive to install and to operate, and can not be taken into the woods, so the heavy unbarked bolts have to be transported to them. Consequently, clean, light, hand-peeled wood is still much in demand. Many mills are willing to pay a premium of around \$2 a cord to get it.

Wood is most easily peeled in the spring and early summer, when, as the loggers say, "the sap is up". The tool used for sap peeling is the spud. For softwoods and ~~thin~~<sup>green</sup>-barked hardwoods a slender spud is used. The simplest pattern is a long, thin and slightly curved chisel with a handle. Many have been made from halves of old automobile spring leaves, and they work very well. A wooden handle should be riveted on the cut-off end of the spring leaf half. The completed spud should be about 24" to 30" long.



AUTO SPRING SPUD

The favorite spud in the northeast, however, is the one first developed for peeling hemlock. It is now widely used on spruce pulpwood jobs, particularly in the Adirondacks. It has a straight or slightly curved blade about an inch and a quarter wide. The point is rounded. In the upper part of the metal shank is a socket into which is fitted a turned hardwood handle. The metal part is about 15 inches long and the handle is about 12 inches in length. One side of the blade has a special hook which is ground to a sharp edge. This is used to cut through the bark before the blade is inserted under it.



HEMLOCK SPUD

Some peelers prefer the saucer spud developed in Maine. This, as its name would indicate, has a saucer-shaped chisel which is very good for loosening the bark from the wood after a slit has been started. The saucer spud is usually 24" to 30" long, including the handle.



SAUCER-SHAPED SPUD

For most hardwoods a wider spud is needed. One commercially available is made for peeling cedar poles. It is shaped something like a straightened-out garden hoe. Poles are usually cut when the sap is down, and peeling them, even with this tool, is a considerable chore. For use on hardwoods the corners of the cedar spud should be rounded off, and most users will cut the length of the 4' handle down.

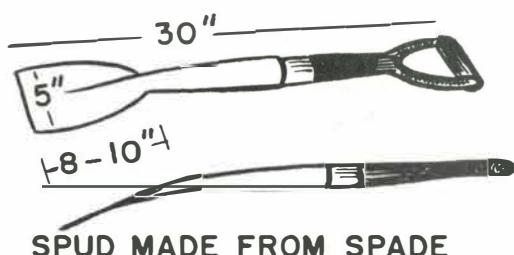
Other hardwood spuds are made from steel bars or from old hoes or spades. One of the latter is shown in the following pictures.



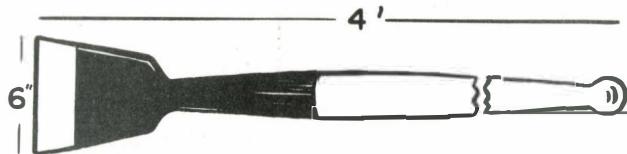
PEELING TO GET RID OF BARK  
....Aspen pulpwood



PEELING TO SAVE BARK  
....Hemlock tanbark



SPUD MADE FROM SPADE



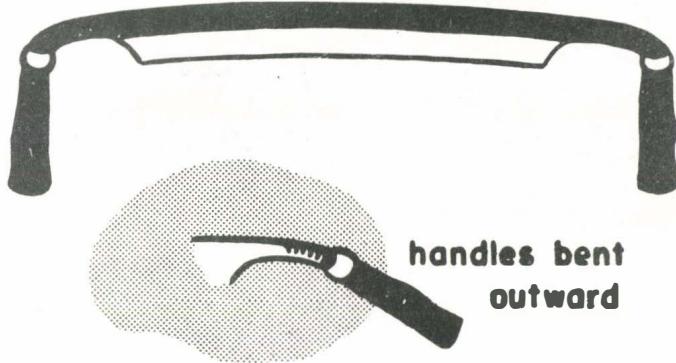
CEDAR SPUD

When kept sharp as it should be, the spud is a dangerous tool. The peeler first slits the bark along the top of the log and chops or slits it around the log at about 4' intervals. Then by inserting the point of the spud, he skins the bark off first on the far side and then on the near side. It should come off in long sheets. But when the spud is dull, or it and the peeler's hands are covered with gum or pitch from resinous woods it is apt to get out of control. As he works on the lower portion of the far side of the log the spud can penetrate the bark and slice into his shins. On the top of the near side it can slice through and cut his thigh or groin. The fact that the peeling season in the north woods is also the season for mosquitoes, "punkies", and "black flies" accounts for many of the accidents with spuds. Liberal applications of kerosene will help to keep the tool and the peeler's hands free of pitch, and "fly dope" even though it is only the old standby, pine tar and lard, will help to keep the insect pests in check.

#### Drawshaves or Timber Shaves

Sometimes it becomes necessary to hand peel wood which is not in sap peeling condition. In this case the spud is useless. It is necessary to use the slow and tiresome drawshave. This tool is much like the one used by carpenters except that the blade is heavier.

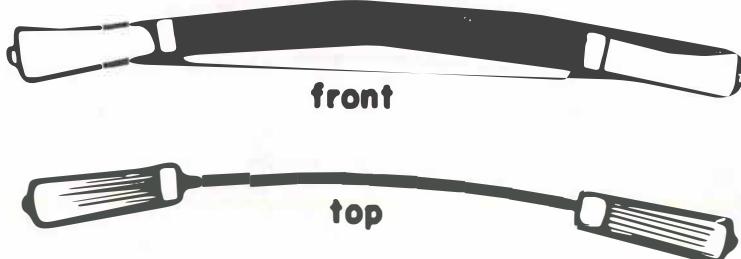
DRAWSHAVE



Only one edge of the blade is beveled. In shaving off the bark this beveled edge is next to the log. Many users bend the handles outward, as shown, to give them a better grip.

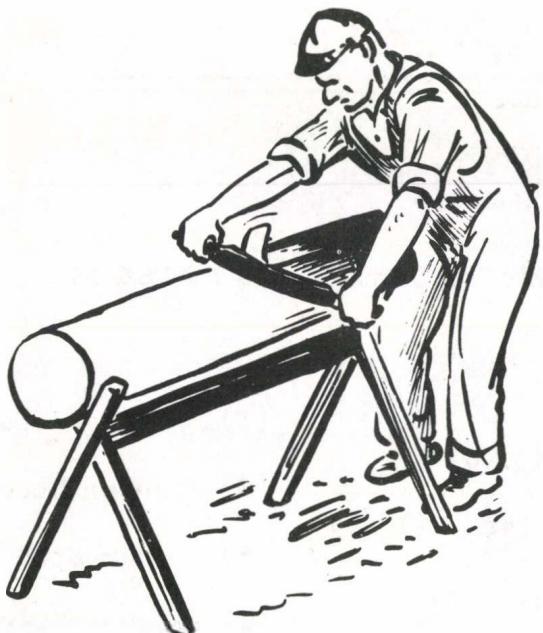
Many peeler's prefer the timber shave which has handles extending straight out from the ends of the blade. It is also curved to better fit the contour of the log. With this type, they get a better grip, there is less chance of getting skinned knuckles, and it is claimed that due to the curved blade the peeling goes faster, especially on small logs.

### TIMBERSHAVE

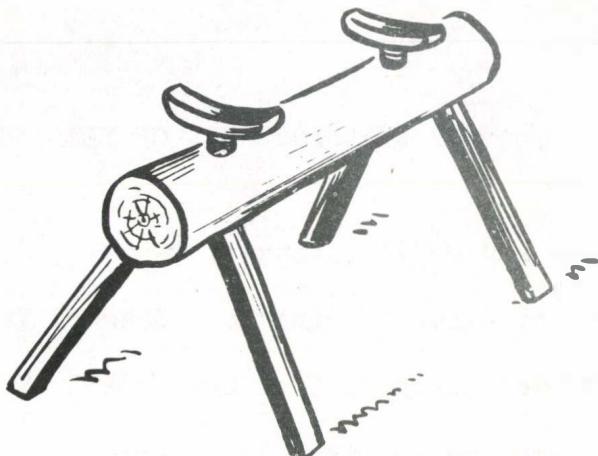


If the wood to be peeled is already in four-foot lengths, or in similar short bolts, it is necessary to have a shaving horse. This is made on the pattern of a bucksaw horse except that it should be heavy enough that it will not be tipped over. In some cases it may be best to stake the legs down by driving pegs in the ground and wiring the legs to them.

### Shaving Horse



SHAVING HORSE



ANOTHER TYPE OF SHAVING HORSE

The best way to draw shave a log or pole is to place one end on another log or on a long stout sawhorse. The peeler straddles the log and works backward rolling the log as he goes. If the log is of any size, he may have a partner roll it with a cant hook or get off and do the rolling himself.



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#### SOME MANUFACTURERS OF PEELING DEVICES USED IN THE NORTHEAST

Snow and Neally, Bangor, Maine. (2) (4)

(1) Hemlock Spud

Peavey Manufacturing Co., Brewer, Maine (3)

(2) Saucer Spud

American Logging Tool Co., Evart, Michigan. (1) (3)

(3) Cedar Spud

Warren Axe and Tool Co., Warren, Pa. (1) (3)

(4) Timber Shave

Leach Co., Oshkosh, Wisconsin (1)

Sections in this series previously issued:

Section 1: How to Choose and Use Your Axe

Section 2: How to Choose, Use and Sharpen a Crosscut Saw

Section 3: How to Select and Take Care of Your Bow Saw

Section 4: Wedges and Their Use in Logging -- Splitting Wood

Section 5: Peavies, Cant Hooks and Pulp Hooks